

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PROMOTING ADOPTION AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take a moment to voice my support for the Promoting Adoption and Legal Guardianship for Children in Foster Care Act. This bipartisan bill makes important advancements in encouraging states to place children in permanent, caring homes. I am especially pleased that the bill extends the Family Connection grants that help link foster children with family members. Nearly 400,000 children make up our nation's foster care population, with more than one in four (approximately 28 percent of these vulnerable children living with a grandparent or other relative. Research clearly shows that kinship foster care families are safer, more stable placements that are more likely to keep children connected with their siblings and communities than non-relative placements. Continuing these grants will advance the safety and well-being of children in care by connecting them with safe and caring relatives. I also strongly support the protections for youth from returning into care or losing assistance in the event that their legal guardian dies or is incapacitated. I actively worked to advance both of these provisions that encourage permanency and strengthen services to support children and families, and I am very happy they are included in this legislation.

In addition, I commend the bill and its authors for recognizing guardianship in addition to adoption as an important permanency option for children in care. Guardianship and kinship caregiving are very significant for Chicago, for Illinois, and for the African American community. My Congressional District has the highest percentage of children living with grandparent caregivers in the nation, followed closely by two other Congressional Districts in Illinois. Given the research showing that African American youth remain in care longer in part because of a hesitancy to choose adoption given the requirement to terminate parental rights, rewarding states for promoting permanency via guardianship is an important step forward to helping children in care find safe, permanent homes. Importantly, a study of the Illinois Subsidized Guardianship Demonstration Waiver demonstrated that the offer of subsidized guardianship increased overall rates of family permanency by six percentage points over and above the level of performance in a randomly-assigned control group that was limited to the option of adoption only. Incentivizing guardianship rather than incentivizing a particular path to permanency allows families to make the permanency choice that best fits the particular needs and circumstances of their family. It is my hope

that we can increase the symmetry between guardianship and adoption incentives as this bill advances.

This bill makes a number of other improvements to the law. It calculates permanency incentives based on improvements in the rate of adoptions rather than the number of adoptions, so that states that reduce their case-loads still can demonstrate their success in moving youth to permanent safe homes. The bill also focuses more resources on older youth, enhances reporting requirements related to the use of state dollars, and strengthens benefits and services by establishing a minimum for post-adoption services. In closing, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill that will help the 100,000 children in foster care find permanent homes.

RECOGNIZING 2013 FOUNDERS AWARD RECIPIENT KATHERINE HANLEY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 24, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my friend, mentor, and predecessor, Ms. Katherine Hanley, the former Providence District representative and Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, for being honored with the 2013 Founders Award from the Lorton Arts Foundation. Initiated in 2011, the Founders Award honors those who have made a significant impact on the Lorton Arts Foundation and the Workhouse Arts Center.

In 1910, the United States Government purchased 1,155 acres of rural property in southern Fairfax County for the yet to be built Lorton Correctional Facility. Over the next several years, the total acreage increased to more than 3,000 acres. This prison was originally a model of progressive incarceration; the Workhouse and Reformatory were designed to "rehabilitate and reform prisoners through fresh air, good food, and honest work," and programs integrated work, home, education, recreation, health, and religion. In pursuit of this mission to reform instead of purely punish, inmates raised beef and dairy cattle, hogs, poultry, vegetables, and fruit. Industry was a major activity, and the inmates made a variety of products and were trained to become electricians, mechanics, and plumbers. Initially, neither the Workhouse nor the Reformatory had walls, fences, cells, or locks.

In the 1920s and 1930s the original wooden structures were replaced by brick structures. Over the following decades, what had begun as a true reformatory had become an overcrowded, poorly managed facility. In 1995 more than 7,300 inmates were housed at the facility and the District of Columbia lacked the financial resources to continue its operation. The Federal Government assumed financial and administrative control of the prison, and in 1997 and 1998, legislation was passed to

close Lorton Prison. The last prisoners were transferred from the facility in 2001.

As Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Kate led the county's effort to acquire and transform the former prison site. In 2002, through a unique collaboration between the Federal Government, Fairfax County, and private organizations, 2,324 acres of the former prison site was sold to Fairfax County. The transfer took place under Kate's leadership, and she, along with Mount Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland, set in motion a comprehensive planning effort with the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Citizens Task Force to create a new vision for the community. This multi-year exercise resulted in a rebirth for the former prison and surrounding community as South County became one of the fastest growing sections of the county with the construction of thousands of new homes, retail and commercial space, a golf course, and three new schools.

A critical component of the reinvention of the region was the establishment of the Workhouse Arts Center. Established in 2008 by the Lorton Arts Foundation, The Workhouse has become the region's most distinctive cultural arts center, housing artist studios, galleries, a youth arts center, a theatre, and the Metropolitan School of the Arts, all in buildings that once had housed inmates. The Workhouse supports more than 100 professional and emerging artists, providing them affordable studios and galleries in which to exhibit their work. In addition to visual arts, the Workhouse Arts Center is home to performing arts, including theater, film, musical and dance performances. The Education Department offers more than 150 classes and workshops each quarter, in a broad spectrum of art disciplines. The Workhouse has also partnered with my office by creating a professional gallery exhibit of all artwork submitted as entries into the annual Congressional Arts Competition for the 11th District of Virginia.

The transformation of South County and the establishment of the Workhouse Arts Center would not have been possible without Kate's vision, persistence, creativity, and effectiveness. After serving as Chairman from 1995–2003, Kate accepted positions with the Commonwealth of Virginia, first on the Transportation Board and later as Secretary of the Commonwealth. I was honored to continue her work with the Workhouse Arts Center and the Lorton Arts Foundation when I succeeded her as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating my friend Kate Hanley on receiving the 2013 Founders Award and in thanking her for her leadership and vision that led to the creation of the Lorton Arts Foundation and Workhouse Arts Center, which has become one of the great gems in the National Capital Region.

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